

**USE OF CHILDREN LITERATURE TO PROMOTE COMMUNICATIVE ABILITIES  
IN 5TH GRADERS AT INSTITUTO TECNICO MARILLAC**

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## ABSTRACT

This document describes the planning, execution, and results of a classroom project that had as focus the use of children's literature with communicative purposes. The population involved in this project consisted of 34 fifth graders from the public school *Instituto Técnico Marillac* located in *Santa Rosa de Cabal*. They were exposed to the green eggs and ham book by Dr. Seuss which contained different chunks of language that rhymed and that were adapted by teachers in the form of small images that represented the page of the book that was worked in the session; with this, students were elaborating a simulation of the book by pasting those images in chronological order on their personal agendas. Those agendas were provided by teachers at the beginning of the implementation with the purpose of registering the events during the project.

The artifacts used to collect information about the process were the students' personal agendas, teachers' journals and observation formats. The data analysis was conducted by the study of the information gathered from the artifacts. Hence, this information was categorized to be measured into 3 results: Professional growth, Linguistic outcomes and Students responses. It was showed that students' level of participation as well as the use of English for the sharing of meaningful information increased because of the adaptation of the chunks of language from the book with their familiar information supported by visual aids and rhymes. Furthermore, it was evidenced that students' emotional states were transformed from shyness to motivation and confidence that enhanced participation during the implementations. Finally, it was also noticed that teachers raised awareness in their exploration of a professional identity by checking the effectiveness of different strategies to explain a thematic, model an exercise, or conduct an activity.

Key-words: Literature, communication, chunks of language, visual aids, rhymes.

## RESUMEN

Este documento describe la planificación, ejecución y resultados de un proyecto de aula que tuvo como objetivo el uso de la literatura infantil con fines comunicativos. La población involucrada en este proyecto consistió de 34 estudiantes de quinto grado de la escuela pública Instituto Técnico Marillac ubicada en Santa Rosa de Cabal. Los estudiantes fueron expuestos al libro *Green eggs and ham* del Dr. Seuss que contenía diferentes expresiones en inglés que rimaban y que fueron adaptadas por las profesoras en pequeñas impresiones de las páginas del libro de la sesión; con esto, los estudiantes estaban elaborando una simulación del libro al pegar esas imágenes en orden cronológico en sus agendas personales. Las agendas fueron provistas por las profesoras al comienzo de la implementación con el propósito de registrar los eventos durante el proyecto. Los artefactos utilizados para recopilar información sobre el proceso fueron las agendas personales de los estudiantes, los diarios de las docentes y los formatos de observación. El análisis de los datos se realizó mediante el estudio de la información recopilada con los artefactos. Por lo tanto, esta información se categorizó para ser analizada en 3 secciones de resultados: crecimiento profesional, impactos lingüísticos y respuestas de los estudiantes. Se demostró que el nivel de participación de los estudiantes y el uso del inglés para compartir información significativa aumentaron debido a la adaptación de los fragmentos del lenguaje del libro con su información familiar respaldada por ayudas visuales y rimas. Además, se evidenció que a través de diferentes actividades, los estados emocionales de los estudiantes cambiaron de la timidez a la motivación y la confianza, aumentando su participación durante las implementaciones. Finalmente, se notó que los maestros crearon conciencia en la exploración de su identidad profesional al evaluar la efectividad de diferentes estrategias.

Palabras clave: Literatura, comunicación, expresiones en inglés, ayudas visuales, rimas.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the learning of a second language is not constrained to grammar structures and the traditional method, giving a new perspective to the use of English inside an EFL classroom has become a challenge. In view of the focus that both literature and English had had until now in the region, which is centered in the reading skill and the structural component respectively, it was a challenge for us to incorporate one into the other with communicative purposes. The concurrence of those three fields in an EFL classroom has not been matter of discussion of handy literature for students of the *Licenciatura en Bilingüismo* from UTP. For this reason, and considering the importance of associating the teaching of English with meaningful information for learners, this project emerged as a proposal for the use of children literature to promote communicative abilities in a fifth grade located in Santa Rosa de Cabal, Risaralda. Consequently, this classroom project explored the benefits and difficulties of including books as authentic material (Ghosn, 2002) as well as the advantages and challenges of promoting real communication in the classroom (Sell, R. 2000).

Taking into consideration that our main purpose inside the classroom regarded on the communication, one assumption for our project was taken from Sell (2000) in which communicative situations were triangular, and two parties were in communication about a third one. In the project, the first two parties were teachers and learners and the third part was *green eggs and ham* book. This third entity needed to involve learner's opinions, preferences, dislikes or close information to enhance their participation by the fact of having important information for them to talk about. Hence, English as a second language was handled not only to understand some grammatical structures but also to authentically use it in real situations of their lives.

This classroom project contemplated two studies in the field of teaching literature in the EFL process that focus on its benefits and the kind of genres we can work with. The studies were Reading Comprehension and Literary Narrative by Kristian Urlaub (2088) and Teaching English through literature by Murat Hişmanoğlu (2005). Moreover, it explored the role of literature as communication developed by Roger D. Sell (2000) in which he developed a thorough-going interdisciplinary between the fields of literary scholarship and linguistics.



## 2. JUSTIFICATION

English teaching programs have gained importance around the world due to the access to the information and competitiveness required from 21st-century citizens. Considering this, the ministry of education has implemented some programs as "Colombia very well" with strategies as "Bunny Bonita" " English for Colombia", "My ABC English kit" and "English, please!", whose focus is a bilingual profile in a due date: 2019. However, some tests results' as the shown by PISA and "Education first" state that our level is not the expected and we still have some things to improve for achieving this goal. Although we raised some points in PISA, from position 403 to 425 in 2012, and we considerably improved in the reading area (obtaining 425 in a general average of 493), we lack efficient lines of action that help our students to reach the expected levels. It is also exhibited by results published by Education First, an international language teaching company, who presented its 2015 version of EF EPI (English Proficiency Index), a global English language index that measured language skills Of 70 countries in which Colombia occupies the 57 position.

Regarding to this, Mejía, S. (2016) in *¿Vamos hacia una Colombia bilingüe?* mentions some deficits in the educational system as the absence of English teachers and the quality of learning in public institutions. She also raises others problems, which are the lack of time for the classes, the shortage of materials, the absence of teachers able to teach English and the minimal opportunities to use the language in the classroom. Although there have been a lot of programs proposed by *Ministerio de Educación*, those did not succeed in the task of becoming a bilingual country; for this reason, the minister of education has been extended the due date until 2025 and now we must work on this national project by proposing new plans and strategies.

Supported by Hişmanoğlu (2005), the practical use of English inside the classroom is one of the primary challenges that Language teaching education has studied since it promotes a real exchange of communication that results meaningful for the learner. In this way, looking for a resource or strategy that promotes a meaningful interaction between learners in a second language, we decided to explore the benefits offered by Literature in terms of personal enrichment/ exchange and linguistic awareness. To start with, literature is perceived as a useful source for teaching English. Hişmanoğlu (2005) supports this idea by saying that:

Literature is authentic material. Most works of literature are not created for the primary purpose of teaching a language. Many authentic samples of language in real-life contexts (i.e. travel timetables, city plans, forms, pamphlets, cartoons, advertisements, newspaper or magazine articles) are included within recently developed course materials. Thus, in a classroom context, learners are exposed to actual language samples of real life settings. Literature can act as a beneficial complement to such materials. (p. 54)

Besides, according to Gosh (2002), a good reason for using literature in a language class is the change agent potential power of good literature to transform, to change attitudes, and to help eradicate prejudice while fostering empathy, tolerance, and an awareness of global problems; besides, it can transform people's mind by providing a global personal view of the world. Furthermore, according to Todorov (1967), we can analyze some structural aspects of the language through specific plays of literature.

Taking into account the previous information, the necessity of implementing different materials and strategies to support students in the development of the use of English for communicative purposes is paramount since the problem is focused on the adaptation of the appropriate materials. Therefore, it is important to find and include relevant material that can reinforce the communicative abilities in English.

The idea for this classroom project came up as a desire of integrating literary input in EFL classroom with communicative purposes. This classroom project used literary forms such as short stories to promote the communicative use of English in the EFL classroom since literature can provide learners with structures of the language as well as authentic input to have a basic communication in English. Besides, sell (2000) states that the purpose of teaching literature in language classes is not to provide information about the particular pieces of literature in the syllabus but to get the learners to recognize how these particular pieces exemplify more general principles of communication. It offers a variety of forms that learners can choose, discover, and enjoy. Finally, as a heritage for the society, growing up learners with better thinking skills that can be improved through literature promote the construction of a new age of human beings. The purpose of this project is to teach English through literature in order to provide learners an innovated way to communicate in a second language. On top of that, this project not only gives advises about including literature in EFL classroom with communicative purposes, but it also promotes reading as one of the most enriching input for language learners and literature as a widener for imagination and creativity (Nussbaum, 1997).

### **3. OBJECTIVES**

#### **3.1. Teaching Objectives**

**Aim:**

- To evaluate the impact of children literature on the learning process of students regarding the use of English for communicative purposes.

**Specific objectives:**

- To use the story of “Sam I am” to make some grammatical and phonological aspects explicit that support the communicative use of English in the class.
- To develop kinesthetic skills to encourage the understanding of the chunks of language

#### **3.2. Learning Objectives**

**Aim:**

- To use Green eggs and ham book to encourage fifth graders to adapt its chunks of language to enhance communicative oral and written responses.

**Specific:**

- To adapt the chunks of language from Green eggs and ham book including personal information.
- To create an Agenda with each student to register the sequence of events in order from the story “Green eggs and ham” in such a way that it promotes English for communication.

## **4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **4.1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The use of literature in a second language for teaching both basic language skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking) and language areas (i.e. vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation) is a potential strategy in the classroom due to its cultural enrichment, language enrichment, personal involvement and authenticity. In the same way, as Hişmanoğlu (2005) states, literature is a potent resource in terms of universality, non-triviality, personal relevance, variety, interest, economy, suggestive power, and ambiguity. Considering the leadership of literature in our project, this conceptual framework is constituted by conceptions and some ways of applying it inside the classroom supported by intellectuals in the field as Todorov, T. (1967), Barthes, R. (1975) , Aguiar V. M. (1986) and Hişmanoğlu (2005)

#### **4.1.1. Definition of Literature**

The concept of literature has been intensively studied by many scholars that agree on its benefits in EFL classroom; the concept we handle for this project is made of contributions of literary critics as Todorov, T. (1967), Barthes, R. (1975) and Aguiar V. M. (1986). In the book “Literature and meaning” (1967), Todorov defined literature as theory of language based on the structural analysis of a popular French epistolary novel by Pierre Choderlos de Laclos called “The dangerous liaisons” (1782); through this book Todorov explained that the literary system is a model for the language and it could be understood by been analyzed in context, it means through specific plays. After the constitutional analysis of the novel, he concluded that the

literary work does not exist out of its verbal literalness; therefore, literature can lead us to an exploration of the essence of language. While individuals discover functional and structural aspects of the linguistic system through literary narrative, they get personally involved with new topics and perspectives; in fact, Roland Barthes in his book “The pleasure of text” (1975) established two effects of texts: Pleasure (Plaisir) and bliss (Jouissance), the last word carries the meaning of orgasm in French. Hence, Barthes (1975) approximates literature to the possibility of dialectics in which there is a place for the pleasure. Barthes affirms that texts are the proof of the desire of an author over the readers, and this desire is corresponded by the act of reading. Then, Aguiar e Silva condensed in his book “Theory of literature” (1986) his appreciation of Literature as an intellectual and artistic activity expressed in different types of genres that could be narrative, epic or dramatic and could approach different expectations of learners toward its literary experience. Consequently, by working through different genres as short stories, novels or poetry, the pleasant experience cited by Barthes (1975) could be a reality inside the classroom.

#### **4.1.2. Genres of literature**

With the purpose of using literature in the EFL classroom, we needed to analyze learners’ level and the genre of literature that was the more appropriate according to their abilities. For this reason, we selected short stories since they integrated most of the skills at the same time that transformed attitudes, enhanced tolerance towards different beliefs and reduced prejudices. According to Sell (2000), literary texts as short stories can have features of content, form and style which are not often found elsewhere and that can serve to create bridges between students’ experiences and English structures in a communicative way.

#### **4.1.3. Teaching literature in EFL classroom**

As it was mentioned before, there are reasons to believe that literature provides many benefits to EFL learners; nevertheless, it has not been given importance to it as a tool for the class. Consequently, three reasons were presented to support the use of literature in EFL classroom. First, literature can transform people's mind since it provided a global-personal view of the world. Ghosn (2002) supported this idea by saying that another compelling reason for using literature in a language class was the change agent potential power of good literature to transform, to change attitudes, and to help eradicate prejudice while fostering empathy, tolerance, and an awareness of global problems. Second, literature was authentic material which provided a realistic view in the use of the language in different situations. In 2003, Tarakçıoğlu pointed out that the authentic use of language in a literary text displayed a certain dialect or register in a particular social context, which was supposed to be true to life, because unlike other styles, literature does not and cannot exclude any aspects of language.

Finally, Hişmanoğlu (2005) emphasized that literature provided learners with a wide range of individual lexical or syntactic items; by reading a substantial and contextualized body of text, students became familiar with many features of the written language. In other words, the language enrichment that learners could achieve was huge since literature was the vivid example of language: it showed the variety of structures, it contained lots of unknown words for the readers and also it exemplified how to connect ideas while writing. In conclusion, literature could be seen as a resource for learning a language; it helped the personal growth of learners and at the same time, it gave them the sample of how language works owing to different situations.

#### **4.1.4. Application of literature in EFL classroom**

After reviewing relevant considerations about the concept of Literature and its multiple advantages for teachers in EFL classroom, it was essential to contemplate how to work with each skill. Besides the above-mentioned reasons to incorporate literature in EFL classroom, one of its main functions was the socio cultural richness product of regional dialects, jargon and idiolects that was provided to learners (Bakhtin, 1981). Therefore, teachers were aware of the literary texts they selected to be used in the classes considering learners' needs, interests, language level, cultural background and motivation.

In agreement with Hişmanoğlu (2005), literature stimulated the acquisition of language through the use of authentic material and real situations, which were inexhaustible resources that promoted language awareness in learners. Besides, literature was a powerful pedagogic tool that encouraged communicative competence and allowed the interpretation of very different discourses such as the poetic, expressive or transactional (Bakhtin, 1981).

Regarding the material included in the classroom, there has been a broad discussion about the use of literary adaptations in EFL classes. Literature is the result of a relationship between educational, social, technical and linguistic systems that constitute a culture, then, the literary text that we know today is the product of a historical dialogue (Bakhtin 1981). Bakhtin coined the ideas of Dialogism, Polyphony, and Heteroglossia to explain the plurality of consciousness and the interaction of different perspectives and ideologies inside any literary work. With these mentioned elements inside books, they transformed themselves by dialoguing across the history with other pieces of art, and people also modified their perspectives and ways to be in the world by getting in touch with other's world, through literature. Consequently, the use of some pieces



of literature in EFL classroom favored the discovering of a historic dialogue and inspired learners to look for more works and new authors. Although there are some complex and deep plays and authors that should be included in the lessons, learners should not be besieged by complex content and linguistic features. Hence, the original and unedited content was not a problem for the developing of the sessions, but it was important how it was included. For example, it is well known that learners must read *Don Quijote de la Mancha* at secondary school, and it is so long but really important to know. Then, teachers can work with summaries or adaptations that grant at least the discovering and recognition of the play without creating a bad feeling toward reading.

According to Hişmanoğlu (2005), literature could be a model for the four skills in the following way:

### **Literature and reading:**

The comprehension of a literary work could be achieved by conducting discussions at the literal level including questions of fact regarding:

- Set
- Characters
- Plot

By identifying essential elements of the story, learners can move to the inferential level by speculating and interpreting minimal parts of the text. After this, learners are ready to do a collaborative work in which they share their ideas and opinions toward the play. In this stage learners create new conditions for the story and think creatively about it, improving problem-

solving abilities. The discussion derived from these activities could be used as authentic material for practicing the other three skills.

### **Literature and writing:**

Literature offers a wide variety of themes, styles, organization and content that could prompt writing process in learners. It could be a model for this skill by developing the following activities:

- Controlled writing: It is used for the beginning level, and its intention is to practice some grammatical features by reproducing them. For instance, learners can rewrite some passages in the first person or they can be reporters doing a live newscast.
- Guided writing: It corresponds to intermediate level, and its intention is to comprehend the work. Learners are intended to complete sentences or paragraphs that retell or sum up the story.
- Reproducing the model: It comprises techniques as paraphrase, summary, and adaption. First, paraphrasing is very functional with poetry since it involves the own words of each learner in the interpretation of a poem. Moreover, summary is convenient for short stories by virtue of its chronological order and concrete elements. In the same way, adaptation requires rewrite prose into dialogue or vice versa, this activity enables learners to appreciate the differences between written and spoken English.

### **Literature as a subject matter for writing:**

When reading content is literature, learners can make inferences and formulate their own hypothesis based on arguments they find across the text, thus they learn how to think critically.

There are two kinds of literature as a subject matter for writing:

- Writing “On or About” Literature: It comprises traditional assignments in which learners analyze the work. It could happen before reading a text based on discussions that include personal experiences of learners. Common activities are written responses to questions, paragraph writing, in-class essays, and take-home compositions
- Writing “Out of” Literature: This means using literary work as a platform for compositions. It includes creative assignments developed around many features of the work as characters, settings, figurative language, and chronological order of the story. Some activities that could be implemented are writing letters to a character, drama-inspired writing, changing the work (ending, locations, characters), adding to the work (writing imaginary episodes or sequels).

### **Literature, speaking, and listening:**

Apart from being a powerful resource for writing and reading, literature can fortify learners’ listening and speaking abilities by developing some activities as oral reading, dramatizations, role plays, improvisations, pantomiming, reenactment, discussion, and group activities. Teachers could ask for videos of learners reading aloud in order to visualize themselves in the use of a foreign language. Those tasks related with drama strengthen the motivation of learners toward the process and enhance their relationships and work team abilities since they require more preparation and a deeper understanding of the work.

The use of literature in the EFL classroom can integrate most of the four skills due to the amount of activities that can be done based on different genres of literature such as poems, short stories or novels. At the same time, while learners are reading the input, they will be enhancing critical thinking, reading comprehension and vocabulary. Besides, the personal involvement of the learner with the text will provide a different perspective of the world and its contrasting cultures. Apart from this, literature can build up interest in new topics and personal relevance, it can show how language is articulated in written form and also it becomes a model of writing for many learners.

The most convenient portions of this theoretical framework were applied to our context in the teaching of English through literature with communicative purposes. In this sense, learners were using literature as a main focus to learn vocabulary, grammatical structures, and meaningful information and also they became a human as a part of the world since they were more conscious and critical towards different perspectives and beliefs.

#### **4.1.5. Literature as communication**

Considering that our main purpose inside the classroom regarded on the communication, we perceived literary reading and writing as uses of language which amount to interpersonal activity and which were capable of bringing about a change in the status quo. Then, our perception about literature as a genuine form of communication given its pragmatic conditions carries out a strong echo of the Greek root *pragma* (= deed) that leads us to think about an active and participative role of learners inside the classroom. Then, one main assumption for our project was that communicative situations were triangular, and two parties

were in communication about a third one. One of the first two parties could be “me” “you” or “us” and the third one could be something or someone unconnected with the communicants themselves, in such a way that learners open themselves to the possibility of mental re-adjustments by negotiating or sharing some views about the third entity (Sell, R, 2000).

Taking into account that this view of communication was not released to a speaker-hearer, writer-reader, narrator- narrate or sender- receiver and by the contrary it included a third part, it was fundamental the role of a mediator who studied and analyzed the social and context issues that made this third element an appropriate and meaningful one. Then, our role as practitioners was to use the power of imaginative self- projection into otherness through the appropriate selection of resources that encompasses learner’s profile, interests, and background knowledge and context conditions.

The incorporation of children literature in the EFL classroom to teach English had been a matter subject to study due to the multiple benefits it had showed. For instance, Lao and Krashen (2000) did a comparison between a group of students that read literary texts and another group that non-read literary texts. The group who read literary texts showed improvement in vocabulary and reading. Another benefit that literature provided to learners was the personal growth in different aspects. Akyel and Yalçin (1990) pointed out that incorporating a variety of literary themes offered different things to many individual’s interest and taste. They also stated that literature helped learners to expand their linguistic and cognitive skills, cultural knowledge and sensitivity. Besides, literature enhanced communicative abilities on learners since it was authentic material and it used real situations language.

The awareness of language was expanded by the use of literature as learners dealt with language that was not standard, which helped them understand norms associated with language

use (Sell, 2000). With the selection of the appropriate material, learners were able to achieve all these benefits and also to improve their communicative abilities in English by the application of activities such as role playing, dramatization, improvisation and written assignments and with the appropriate guidance of the pre-service teacher.

#### **4.1.6. Backward Design as an approach for data analysis.**

Following the analogy of Forward and Central Design presented by Richards (2013), Backward Design (BD) started structuring content and teaching materials after analyzing the desired learning outcomes or results. This approach was different from Forward and Central ones, in which content and processes had primary places and they followed a linear order. By implementing this approach, the process began with a clear understanding of the ends in mind and the use of objectives as planning units. Then, the educational objectives became the criteria that practitioners used to select the material, outline essential input, develop procedures and examine tests. Although the use of objectives at the beginning of the planning was often criticized because of the industrialization of education and the tendency to behavioral models, Wiggins and McTighe (2006) ensure:

The error of activity-oriented design might be called “hands-on without being minds-on” engaging experiences that lead only accidentally, if at all, to insight or achievement ... activity oriented curricula lack an explicit focus on important ideas and evidence of learning....[learners] are led to think the learning is the activity instead of seeing that the learning comes from being asked to consider the meaning of the activity ... (Wiggins and McTighe, 2006: 16-17).

Hence, the planning of objectives and expected results explicitated the focus of the sessions and the road it needed to follow to achieve its goals in terms of resources and knowledge.

The authors also recommended three necessary steps for backward planning:

1. Identify desired results.
2. Determine acceptable evidence of learning.
3. Plan learning experiences and instruction.

By following the above steps, teachers avoided the well-known “hands-on without being minds-on” since the beginning of the process included needs analysis, in which the profile of learners and contexts offered a deeper perspective about the practicum and the possibility of creating a solid bridge between academic and personal lives of learners.

Thus, in order to succeed in the process of teaching and learning in this classroom project, it was important to remark the definition of Assessment. Walvoord (2014) defined assessment as the systematic collection of information about student learning, using the time, knowledge, expertise, and resources available, in order to inform decision about how to improve learning.

## 4.2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The use of literature in a second language for teaching both basic language skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking) and language areas (i.e. vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation) is a good strategy in the classroom due to its cultural enrichment, language enrichment, personal involvement and authenticity. In the same way, as Hişmanoğlu (2005) stated, literature is a potent resource in terms of universality, non-triviality, personal relevance, variety, interest, economy, suggestive power and ambiguity. This literature review is composed by the articulation of two studies in the field of teaching literature in EFL process that focus on its benefits and the kind of genres we can work with. The studies are Reading Comprehension and Literary Narrative by Kristian Urlaub and Teaching English through literature by Murat Hişmanoğlu.

To start with, Urlaub (2008) analyzes the process of reading literature in a second language. In this study, the participants were twenty-one Stanford students with intermediate proficiency in German; all of them were English native speakers. This study was conducted online on a CourseWork site. Respecting to the procedure, the participants were randomly divided into two groups: procedural knowledge group (PK-group) and declarative knowledge group (DK-group). All participants completed a consent form, two questionnaires, a pre-test, a treatment, and a post-test. The tests measured the participants' ability to provide a critical response in English to a literary text that was presented to the students in German. As Urlaub (2008) states "While the PK-group received reading comprehension strategy training that focused on the acquisition of procedural knowledge to process L2 literary texts, the DK-group received a presentation that provided factual background knowledge about the particular literary texts used in the study."



Furthermore, Urlaub (2008) establishes that the difference between pre-test and post-test performance indicated the effectiveness of the reading comprehension strategy training as compared to the DK-group, which focused on the acquisition of factual knowledge. Additionally, Urlaub (2008) reported on his results that in the pre-test, the PK-group's mean score was 1.64 and the DK-group's mean score was 1.57. However, in the post-test, the DK-group improved by 8.91% and achieved a mean score of 1.71. In contrast, the PK-group improved by 45.73%. It suggests that the procedural knowledge and training in reading comprehension have an effect that enhances the understanding of texts as well as learning the language through an authentic reading material.

Although the differences between the percentages of DK and PK groups, it is evident that there was an improvement on learner's ability to respond critically to literary texts in a second language based on a model of the reading process for literary texts in a second language that integrates perspectives on reading and understanding from applied linguistics, foreign language pedagogy, and literary theory (Urlaub, 2008)

Similar outcomes in the second language learning process derived from other study by Hişmanoğlu (2005) in which he explores the benefits and the role of literature as a basic component and source of authentic texts of the language curriculum. He explains -according to Collie and Slater (1990:3) - that a teacher could be lead to the use of literature in the classroom owing to its authenticity, cultural enrichment, language enrichment and personal involvement. He also mentions the reasons given by Maley (1989:12) that establish literature as a potent resource inside the classroom, those are: universality, non-triviality, personal relevance, variety, interest, economy, suggestive power and ambiguity. He stands literature as a model for reading,

writing, listening and speaking and describes the kinds of genre that could be used in the process (i.e. poetry, short stories, drama and novels).

Moreover, Hişmanoğlu (2005) exposes the problems that a teacher could face in the process in terms of appropriate materials and adequate preparation in the area of literature teaching. He also mentions the importance of the teacher in the classroom since he should determine the aims and select the appropriate language and teaching method, teaching techniques, and classroom activities. Besides, all the cultural background, interests, ages, sex, etc., should be taken into account in order not to hurt or disturb students.

Literature represents an important field in the second language learning since it provides students with a set of skills given by a new perspective of the world and a new ability to understand people and facts. As Custodio and Sutton (1998:20) express, literature can open horizons of possibility, allowing students to question, interpret, connect, and explore. Regarding to our idea about teaching English through literature, Urlaub (2008) presumes that the procedural knowledge and training in reading comprehension have an effect that enhances the understanding of texts as well as learning the language through authentic reading material. By the same way, Hişmanoğlu (2005) exposes the benefits and the role of literature as a basic component and source of authentic texts of the language curriculum and specific ways in which we can approach those goals inside the classroom by using different genres of literature as drama, poetry, novels or short stories. Those ideas make us think about the importance of incorporating literature in second language classrooms in our context, due to the necessity of interpreting and communicating new realities that political, economic and ideological changes suppose. Practitioners will focus over the integrated curriculum that Urlaub (2008) exposes, which focuses on both language and cultural components from the first day of instruction.

Moreover, with Hişmanoğlu (2005) we can take a look at how literature could be a model for writing, reading, listening and speaking through activities as Changing the Work, Drama-Inspired Writing, oral readings, dramatizations, role playing, improvisations and group activities. We concluded that literature is the opportunity to explore the language through literary narrative, giving moments of pleasure and joy to the learners regarding on the wide range of perspectives and worlds discovered.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

### 5.1. Context

This classroom project was carried out in a public school called *Instituto Técnico Marillac*, located in *Santa Rosa de Cabal*. This school was founded in 1975 and to this day, it belongs to a middle/low socio-economic stratum. The school has a focus which is *Técnico con énfasis en programación Básica de Computadores*. Besides, it has 17 teachers for the subjects in primary and secondary, and 415 students divided in the regular grades. Additionally, the hours of English classes per week in primary are 2 while for secondary, there are 3 or 4, hours of class depending on the planning stage at the beginning of the academic year.

### 5.2. Setting

*Instituto Técnico Marillac* is a school managed by nuns, whose focus is on basic programming of computers. Its students belong to urban and rural zones, and the socioeconomic status of this school is low due to its public nature and the little support from the government, so the materials that belong to the school are mainly provided by the teachers. The teaching of English in this school is guided by the standards of teaching English in Colombia called *Guía 22*. This classroom project worked with fifth graders and the implementation lasted 10 sessions.

### **5.3. Participants**

The participants for this classroom project were 34 fifth graders from the public school *Instituto Técnico Marillac* located in *Santa Rosa de Cabal*, and two practitioners of the English teaching program who switched their roles of teacher and observer every session.

#### **5.3.1 Learners**

The participants of this classroom project were fifth graders whose ages ranged between 10 and 12 years old. There were 18 girls and 16 boys inside the classroom who lived near the institution. They had read some books with the teacher, so they had a literary experience in common; for instance, they read "Jonathan Livingston Seagull", which allowed us to easily work the essential elements of a story with them.

Regarding their psychological and biological development, Piaget (1936) suggests in his theory of cognitive development that the students are preadolescent children going through the concrete operational stage. In this phase, their thinking becomes less egocentric and they are aware of external events; this period is characterized by logical thought and the use of inductive logic or reasoning, which involves going from specific experiences to general principles so learners are able to think about things the way that others see them; such information was fundamental for the way we behaved with them and the words we used, also, the selection of the material was done according to their profile so polemic or hurting topics were avoided.

### 5.3.2. Practitioners

There are many factors to take into consideration at the moment of teaching as every single detail can help on the development of the class or they can disturb the atmosphere. For that reason, teachers (also called practitioners, observers, and teachers in development in this project) needed to be prepared and aware to assume different roles during the lessons for the one that fit in students' needs and the learning process. According to Richards (1996), the roles can vary according to the setting, school administration, cultural factors and teaching style. For instance, the teacher can be a curriculum developer, mentor, team member or researcher. In this project, one of the practitioners was conducting the EFL session -assuming the role of the teacher- while the other was critically observing the class, scenario, and performance of her partner, behavior of learners, responses to the material, content, tasks, activities, and commands - assuming the role of observer. Moreover, the observer was aware of situations, moments or elements that blocked or helped the development of the lesson.

Practitioners were B2 English language users exposed to theories related to motivation, classroom management, and curriculum design as well as to psycholinguistics, pragmatics, and sociolinguistic courses through their training as English teachers in the program of *Licenciatura en bilingüismo con énfasis en inglés*.

### 5.4. Design

Regarding the implementation of the project, the approach selected for conducting the practices was Backward Design. According to Wiggins and McTighe (2006), it is necessary to consider aspects as aims, objectives, expected results, behaviors or abilities to critically check

resources, approaches, methodologies, strategies and/ or activities in a lesson. Thus, we followed the three steps for planning the lessons suggested by Wiggins and McTighe (2006).

To begin, we identified the desired results during the learning process regarding the association of information and use of structures, the raising of awareness on phonological aspects, and the modification of students' perspectives towards communication. These results are listed below:

- First, to associate and use the structures presented in “Green eggs and ham” with personal information and situations inside the classroom so the information discussed in there resulted familiar and meaningful to learners.
- Second, to make students aware about phonetic similarities and semantic differences through pair of words in such a way that learners critically perceive some changes in the pronunciation and meaning of many chunks of language we are using, for example box/ fox, house/mouse, coat/boat.
- Finally, to change the perspective about communication by letting them see each other as the main resource in this process of learning a new language and the whole process of communication.

After the identification of our expectations and results, we determined and established as acceptable evidence some chunks of language mixed with learners' personal information through the register in the agendas; in this way, it had a real meaning for them since they were expressing their own ideas, preferences or thoughts through forms given by “Green eggs and ham”. The evidence was collected through role plays, readings aloud, oral participation and interaction among participants.

As a final step, we used our journals and reflections about the sessions to examine our performance and the impact of the story on the learners. Based on this information we reconsidered the strategies, learning experiences and instructions.

Following these steps we avoided the common “hands-on without being minds-on” since we considered the profile of learners and contexts with the intention of creating a solid bridge between academic and personal lives of learners.

## **5.5. Development and Implementation**

Considering literature as a joyful experience that stimulates the four skills of learners (Hişmanoğlu, 2005), practitioners considered books and materials that fulfill primary objectives as reading comprehension, communicative competence, personal involvement with the themes offered, expansion of the vocabulary, relationships with the context, reactions to other’s world, etc. Hence, this classroom project used as a form of literature the short stories to teach English to EFL learners. They were Green eggs and ham by Dr. Seuss, Jonathan Livingston seagull by Richard Bach and “The mouse and the lion”. The use of literature represents a powerful resource in terms of universality, non-triviality, personal relevance, variety, interest, economy, suggestive power, and ambiguity (Hişmanoğlu, 2005).

Therefore, the analysis of the profile of the learners and the expected results with them as well as the chunks of language that could be used in the classroom and the perspective of communication they already had, led us to use the PPP methodology that clarified the purposes of the sessions to learners and to us.



In the presentation stage, the practitioner started one session by asking learners about Jonathan Livingston seagull characters, scenarios, conflicts and morals since it was a story they had in common; this activity encouraged them to participate and to describe what the story was about. After this, for the practice stage, the teacher pasted some images about the story on the board and she introduced the essential elements of a story which they easily recognized since they remembered all of the details of the narration. For the production stage, students were asked to recognize and share those elements from other stories they were familiar with, and to register this information in their agendas with a short description and more examples.

Regarding the development of this project, learners experienced a new way of learning English through innovative sources as short stories and poetry an hour per week. Learners were opened to many possibilities of exploring the world through words and to learn English features like vocabulary, reading comprehension and cultural knowledge through the sensitization of the mind that is mostly given by literature.

## **5.6. Resources**

Considering literature as a joyful experience that stimulates the four skills of learners (Hişmanoğlu, 2005), practitioners considered books and materials that fulfilled primary objectives as reading comprehension, communicative competence, personal involvement with the themes offered, expansion of the vocabulary, relationships with the context, reactions to other perspectives, etc. The selection of the material was based on the age, interests of the learners,

topics addressed (they should not hurt learner's sensibilities), relevance for the stage according to Piaget's theory of cognitive development (1936) stated above, objectives and previous knowledge in the class.

For instance, practitioners took to class books as "Inside my imagination" by Marta Arteaga (2013) and "Mum" by Mariana Ruiz (2013) which had plenty of colorful images and short but deep and rhymed sentences that easily caught the attention of children. Furthermore, practitioners used books for short stories that fulfill the realities and interests of learners as Green eggs and ham.

## **5.7. Assessment**

In order to succeed in the process of teaching and learning in this classroom project, it was essential to plan and organize in ahead the tasks and activities to assess the process. Therefore, learners were assessed in tasks proposed by the practitioners; they were guided in order to improve comprehension of literary input, they received feedback on their writing activities related to literature, and they developed different activities such as oral reading, dramatization, and role-playing (Hişmanoğlu, 2005), all of them connected with the resources and material used. Additionally, in the agendas learners received in the first session, they registered all the writing process during the lessons and the activities practitioners asked them to do.

Finally, there was a worksheet that evaluated the sum up for the literature lessons, it assessed the main vocabulary, which we managed with a lot of repetition to focus in pronunciation and intonation, and the structures for expressing their thoughts with *like* and

*would* that were some of the grammatical structures taught from the book. Added to this, students were given grades from 1 to 5 according to their interaction in class, improvement, and commitment with the course. For this, we had the support of the in service teacher that validated our points in their English final grade.

## **6. RESULTS**

Identifying the results from the developed project is a fundamental step in the process since it allows the analysis of the achieved goals and implemented strategies as well as its strengths, weaknesses and challenges. This section includes aspects related to professional growth such as classroom management, lesson planning, practitioners' teamwork and assessment, and also linguistic outcomes and students' responses to interpret the learners' participation in the project and their performance.

### **6.1. Professional Growth**

The professional growth is an essential element to consider regarding the practitioners' teaching process. Hence, it impacted the practitioners' teamwork, teaching strategies for assessment purposes, classroom management, and lesson planning towards the growth as new professionals in the field of education. For this analysis we will mention the strengths and the challenges associated with those items.

#### **6.1.1. Practitioners' Teamwork**

The team work in this classroom project had a notable impact as it was a key point that allowed the practitioners to develop the lessons with synergy and meaningful content. For this reason, the practitioners established the 2 roles; one observing and the other one teaching, both roles with a different perspectives from what happened during the lessons. The first strength of

the teamwork among the practitioners was the opportunity to reflect, share ideas, feelings and thoughts through an informal reflection meeting that took place 1-2 days after the lessons to gather ideas and information to improve, analyze and make changes on the development of those. The practitioners shared what they observed about the performance and it was wrote in detailed, for instance on the Journal Entry 1 (J.E.1.) Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup>, the observer stated:

(J.E.1.) “The teacher was a guide for students since they asked her all of the time what they needed to do and she explained them as many times as they needed it; she is a reflective teacher because she considered issues from the last session as little images and voice projection. This time, everyone in the classroom listened to her and everyone watched the images.”

Katherine Cano, April 4<sup>th</sup>

The reflections and the point of view of the observer provided other details and aspects from the lessons that the teacher did not notice as she was focused on the aim for the class. The accurate improvements were done for future lessons owing to the feedback and teamwork that took place during the implementation of the project.

Another reflection about the teacher's performance that contributed to the teamwork was stated on the J.E.2. from March 21<sup>st</sup>

(J.E.2.) “The teacher was a performer because she was trying to expose the vocabulary and to narrate the story to learners through mimics and slow vocalization of words.”

Katherine Cano, March 21<sup>st</sup>.

The perspective from the observer had big impact on the lesson and also on the teacher's performance as she accepted and took into consideration every piece of advice. This aspect about the reflection and the feedback provided by the observer and the point of view from the teacher's

performance contributed to the professional development and growth of the practitioners as they learned how to include the recommendations that were taken from the experience with different strategies and teaching styles to enhance the planning and progress lesson by lesson.

The second strength for the teamwork was the combination of strengths from the two practitioners. The team work showed that the practitioners were not experts in every single aspect about the teaching process and having another point of view for planning lessons or managing unexpected events, gave the opportunity to include distinct aspects, resources or to anticipate problems that could be perceived by the other person. Moreover, all the suggestions, comments and advice from each practitioner and the roles taking place were applied to see what went well or what needed to be improved with another strategy. For instance, the reflections shared on the reflective meetings, expressed a situation the observer notated from the session from March 28<sup>th</sup>, from the J.E.3.; it expressed that the teacher was mostly in the front of the class, and the suggestion given was that “she needs to monitor the other students so they do not have the opportunity to get distracted or to distract others” (J.E.3. Tatiana Caicedo).

With the detailed observations during the lessons and the accurate feedback provided between the practitioners, they could learn how to manage situations such as discipline issues, pets interrupting the classes, the roles the teacher assumed and the lack of motivation from learners that can happen in future classes and different learning scenarios.

#### **6.1.1.2. Challenges**

The practitioners concluded that one aspect that sometimes inhibited the natural flow of the project and implementation was the arrangement of the schedules for the practitioners to meet in

order to plan, do the reflections and observations about the performance and gather new ideas to implement. This was evidenced on J.E.4 by a comment from April 25<sup>th</sup>:

(J.E.4.) “Sometimes we have problems with the arrangement of the schedule for this as both of us have a lot of extra things to do during the week. Nevertheless, we always find the place to discuss the more relevant aspects.”

Tatiana Caicedo, April 25<sup>th</sup>

Although it was a challenge for the practitioners to meet weekly for the reflective sessions due to the time availability, this contributed to the professional growth in such a way that the teachers learnt to have a good time management and multitasking skills for their planned activities. This helped them to be more efficient and to use collaborative work at the moment of planning to take advantage of the disposed time for this.

### **6.1.2. Teaching Strategies for Assessment Purposes**

The practitioners were able to analyze the strategies implemented on the classroom project to see what went well and the ones that did not work as planned. For this reason, the first strength of the teaching strategies was the instructions given by the teacher as this helped the appropriate development of the tasks. On March 28<sup>th</sup>, learners developed an activity in which they needed to identify the parts of a story (plot, characters, setting).

(J.E.5.) “Teacher advises the students to pay attention to the instructions so they can develop the activities correctly. This needs to be included in every session since most of the time students do not get the idea at the first time due to lack of attention.”

Tatiana Caicedo, March 28<sup>th</sup>

The repetition of the instructions during the lessons and the way they were given impacted positively the process as learners were focused on the instructions to do the tasks correctly. This can be evidenced as well on J.E.6., April 25<sup>th</sup> in which the observer stated:

(J.E.6.) “For confirming the information about the structure or the pronunciation of something, the teacher creates a kind of competence in which they must show what an expression means or how a thought is expressed.”

Katherine Cano, April 25<sup>th</sup>

After some classes from the beginning, the practitioners noticed that learners tend to participate more when they were in a competition and someone could win and be the number one. The practitioners found out that by taking advantage of the motivation the competitions generated on learners, the participation during the lessons was positively impacted.

Furthermore, on April 4<sup>th</sup>, after presenting the topic, learners were asked to pronounce aloud the pairs of words, they had some pronunciation mistakes and suddenly the teacher repeated the words again with the student that was asked to do it. The second strength for the teaching strategies was the reading out loud. This impacted positively the atmosphere in the classroom as learners were not afraid of making mistakes since the teacher always helped them to correct and improve the pronunciation.

(J.E.7.)”This session wanted to familiarize students with the vocabulary of the book “Green eggs and ham”, so the words were presented in pairs. The pairs were made by words that are similar in the pronunciation. For instance: Box-fox/ Mouse-house. She asked them to repeat what she pronounced and she reflected about it with them, in order to expose the differences in the meaning but the similarities in the pronunciation.”

Katherine Cano, April 4<sup>th</sup>.

This impacted positively the flow of the sessions as learners learned to pronounce and differentiate the words from the book very quickly with the help of the reading out loud and the



explanations by the teacher. Besides, this generated a comfortable atmosphere among the participants to interact during the lessons.

The third strength for the teaching strategies was monitoring the learners' progress and process among the lessons. This was evidenced in some reflections from April 4<sup>th</sup> on J.E.8., in which students were asked to write a reflection with some questions including likes and dislikes using the topic from the book:

(J.E.8.) "Teacher walked around the classroom to check everything is going right and if they understood the activity and the topic. At the same time, she graded what they had in their agendas"

Katherine Cano, April 4<sup>th</sup>

The monitoring of the learning process affected positively the professional growth of the practitioners since with this teaching strategy; they were able to recognize the gaps in the process according to each learner. Taking into consideration the failures and success of the strategies used in the classes and the learning styles gave the practitioners the opportunity to have a self-reflection on how to apply the more effectively teaching strategies according to the topic and theme of the lesson. Hence, this enhanced the professional growth of the practitioners to learn how to fulfill the lesson goals and the learning needs from the students.

#### **6.1.2.1. Challenges**

For the teaching strategies, practitioners needed to consider that there were different learning styles and also the students' interests. As the project was directly connected with a specific material which was the Green Eggs and Ham book, practitioners took into consideration the chunks of language that students needed to repeat and produce with their own information as

well. The challenge for this was to motivate them to participate and share their information and what they wrote in the agendas; it was easier when teachers in development asked the whole group to participate and repeat. Nonetheless, there were few active participants that were willing to talk and try the structures from the book. This was evidenced and observed in one lesson in which Tatiana's J.E.9. stated that "some students were participating in the class while the others were doing other things." This impacted negatively the development of the project as the practitioners assessed mainly the performance of the whole group rather than the individual.

### **6.1.3. Classroom Management**

The four main findings that positively impacted practitioner's professional growth in terms of classroom management were sitting arrangement, teacher's roles, atmosphere and use of visual and rhythmical resources.

The first strength was sitting arrangement since it allowed the communication between all the participants and the teacher, contributing in this way to the successful exchange of information asked in the activities as well as the assessment of the entire group. It was found on J.E.10. that the sitting arrangement improved the development of the exercises in terms of participation and feedback.

(J.E.10.) "The teacher easily checked students' performance because they were (sitting) in groups. They asked for the view of the teacher in the activities implemented and as they were in small groups she was able to assess the entire group"  
Tatiana Caicedo, March 14<sup>th</sup>

With this sitting arrangement, teachers found that the independence of students for group making increased their participation and the possibility of assessing the entire group. Teachers

also learnt that they could give students the appropriate feedback without discipline issues by freely walking around the classroom and check groups' questions and doubts.

The second strength was teachers' roles as practitioners developed teaching strategies and abilities according to the classroom situation. Practitioners realized that every class was a new experience and for each one it was required a specific reaction or approach to accomplish the demands of the learning process. It was evidenced on J.E.11. and J.E.12. that the different roles assumed by the teacher in development helped the students' understanding of the topics and the achieving of the goals of the programmed activities.

(J.E.11.) "The teacher was a performer because she was trying to expose the vocabulary and to narrate the story to learners through mimics and slow vocalization of words. Students easily got the meaning of what she represented"

Katherine Cano, March 21<sup>st</sup>.

(J.E.12.) "she was a reflective teacher because she considered issues from the last session as little images and voice projection, and now students see and listen better to her"

Tatiana Caicedo, April 4<sup>th</sup>.

The roles developed through the sessions allowed teachers in development to start creating a profile as professionals by assuming roles as performers or reflective teachers who were aware about students and those elements that previously impeded the successful development of the session (as voice projection and size of images).

The third strength in classroom management was the atmosphere since teachers learned how to take advantage of the scenario where the sessions took place, raising their awareness as observers. J.E.13. and J.E.14. evidenced that teachers used visual aids from the classroom to exemplify the topics explained and to encourage students to participate by using them too.

(J.E.13.) "Teacher used the poster of kinds of food to encourage students to say their likes and dislikes."

Katherine Cano, April 25<sup>th</sup>

(J.E.14.) “Teacher took out the poster of means of transportation for students to complete the task and to say in which one of them they could eat green eggs.”

Tatiana Caicedo May 2<sup>nd</sup>

The need for adaptability is now a great demand in education that requires to be considered by teachers in development through the analysis of the challenges of each scenario and the possible advantages or benefits hidden in them. Hence, the atmosphere of this fifth grade allowed practitioners to exploit each element in the classroom in the benefit of the development of the session, adapting themselves and their purposes to the environment.

#### **6.1.3.1. Challenges**

There were also challenges regarding the practitioner's professional growth. Those identified challenges were institutional issues, motivation and personal interaction among the participants.

The first challenge held institutional issues as *Izadas de bandera* and pets inside the classroom that are normally allowed by teachers and students. Practitioners noted on J.E.15. and J.E.16. that those situations interrupted the normal flow of the sessions and distracted the students.

(J.E.15.) “Some ss were distracted as they have *Izada de bandera* later and they were planning like role-plays and cultural interventions for the event.”

Tatiana Caicedo May 2<sup>nd</sup>

(J.E.16.) “For a moment, students got distracted by a dog that arrived to the classroom and it started barking.”

Tatiana Caicedo, March 14<sup>th</sup>

There were some incidents out of the teacher's hands that simply happened all the time in the institution. Practitioner's task is to be prepared to face those challenges and to positively use the incidents in the session.

The second challenge in classroom management was motivation owing to the feeling of laziness that English generated on students. Practitioners registered on J.E.17. that many of them were not interested in the session and they even forgot the agendas at home.

(J.E.17.) "Some of the learners in the back did not bring the agendas and did not pay attention to the teacher, distracting other students and generating discipline problems. This made the teacher to stop to call their attention, affecting the arranged timeline."

Katherine Cano, March 21<sup>st</sup>

It was informed to the practitioners that this situation was not only in English sessions and it involved external and familiar issues. The challenge here is to learn to know the students and the emotional obstacles they could have that impede a good performance on a subject as English.

The third challenge in classroom management was the personal interaction since teachers intended to communicate with students in English about their preferences, dislikes and opinions and to generate discussion between them about the same topics. It was found on J.E.18. that although it was very challenging, students took the initiative to participate translating some words and guessing meanings.

(J.E.18.) "The teacher started asking them questions about what they desire or they would definitely love to have. Students answered in Spanish and they tried to guess the English translation"

Katherine Cano, April 25<sup>th</sup>

The interaction in English is a big challenge that requires commitment and time and although it was not achieved in a 100% students tried to cope with the exercises and to interact with their partners with what they already knew.

The identification of the challenges mentioned above allowed practitioners to illuminate their process as teachers in development and to start thinking about strategies to face them in a classroom.

#### **6.1.4. Lesson Planning**

There were three main findings in lesson planning that benefited the practitioner's professional growth which were visual and rhythmical resources, meaningful content, and body language.

The first strength was the teacher's' use of visual and rhythmical resources to motivate students to participate in the session; it was figured out that the engagement through agendas, images and rhymes raised participants' interest and curiosity for the session. It was found on J.E.19. and J.E.20. that participant were more aware about the activities that included visual material or exercises that make them sing or repeat chunks of language that rhymed.

(J.E.19.)“The teacher gave agendas to each student for them to take notes of English sessions; they started decorating and writing what was on the board on their new notebooks. Students were interested in what was happening because they felt integrated into it and they perceived the agendas as a compromise with the project.”

Katherine Cano, March 21<sup>st</sup>

(J.E.20.) “Ss like to repeat the chunks of language that rhyme as box/fox house/mouse and boat/goat” and to highlight the difference between them: una es caja pero la otra es zorro”

Tatiana Caicedo, April 18<sup>th</sup>.

The resources taken to the classroom as little images to recreate the story, rhymes to practice the chunks of language and agendas to register the information encouraged student’s participation in the sessions as they were committed with the use of these resources.

The use of visual and rhythmical resources taught practitioners that the selection of the material for the activities is a key step in the process of planning and managing the classroom since they considered students’ performance and accomplishment of tasks as well as their expectations and preferences for dynamic material.

The second strength was the meaningful content which helped the teachers to encourage participation and appropriation of the thematic; it held exchange of personal information as students’ preferences, dislikes, opinions, telephone numbers, addresses or favorite food. It was found on J.E.21. and J.E.22. that this kind of information positively impacted students’ performance and participation in the class since they felt closely related to the questions and they saw the use of the structures as useful and familiar.

(J.E.21.) “The modals would, could and may were related to daily situations inside the classroom as solitudes to partners as well as exchanges of personal information; for example: Could you give me your number? May I know your address?”

Katherine Cano, May 9<sup>th</sup>.

(J.E.22.) “The use of modals was associated with their routines, expectations, dreams or inquiries and they shared it with their partners, making it even more significant.”

Katherine Cano, May 23<sup>th</sup>.

The personal information exchanged through the structures given by the book “Green eggs and ham” let students perceive English as something that served them to say important things about them and not only to relate academic matters.

The third strength in lesson planning was body language which improved the kinesthetic abilities of practitioners in front of the classroom; it was found that during the sessions teachers used their own bodies as a resource to make explicit some vocabulary and structures from the book and it increased students’ understanding and participation. It was evidenced on J.E.23. that the teacher found the way to connect her body with the topic explained through movements of her face and arms and the modulation of her voice.

(J.E.23.) “Teacher was really active with the class and doing movements and mimics to make students get the ideas. They wrote in the agendas the meaning of the word she was representing. Good voice projection”

Tatiana Caicedo, March 14.

This strength helped to create an identity as teachers by exploring abilities in modeling a topic, explaining a thematic or conducting an activity. Practitioners found that the use of mimics in the classroom engaged students and clarified the topic for them at the same time it improved their kinesthetic abilities.

#### **6.1.4.1. Challenges**

As the identified strengths in lesson planning, there were also found three main challenges which were bullying, time management and appropriate use of agendas.



The first challenge was bullying, which disturbed the learning atmosphere and the learning process of specific students. It was registered on J.E.24. that disrespectful attitudes toward classmates as laughing at their answers or their pronunciation impeded the development of the lesson plan since the alluded student stopped his participation to fight with the others and the practitioner stopped too to control the situation.

(J.E.24.) "...at the moment of sharing students were very talkative and laughing at others because of grammar and pronunciation mistakes which disturbed a lot the atmosphere."

Tatiana Caicedo, April 25<sup>th</sup>

The successful development of a lesson plan is impeded by an atmosphere in which learners do not respect the process of their partners and laugh at their participation in the session, affecting in this way the time management arranged as well as the activities programmed, so many alternatives to this situation must be taken by the teachers to make students respect other's opinions and contributions. In the same way it disturbs the motivation of other students to raise their hands and let the practitioners and classmates hear their voices because they feel ridiculized by others.

The second challenge in lesson planning was time management since many incidental situations affected the established time for the activities and many of them needed to be postponed or even cancelled. The delays were because of students' attitudes, school pets' or institutional activities as J.E.25. and J.E.26. evidenced.

(J.E.25.) "For a moment, students got distracted by a dog that arrived to the classroom and it started barking. It consumed a lot of time that delayed the activities."

Tatiana Caicedo, March 14<sup>th</sup>

(J.E.26.) “Some ss were distracted as they have Izada de bandera later and they were planning like role-plays and cultural interventions for the event. “

Tatiana Caicedo, May 2<sup>nd</sup>

The time management was a very difficult aspect to control since practitioners were constrained to students’ performance and institutional aspects that modified the scheduled plans. Considering this, keeping a second or third plan in mind results relevant for a teacher.

The third challenge of lesson planning was the appropriate use of the agendas since they were not handled as practitioners expected by all of the participants. Many of them forgot it at home or lost the images and had them very disorganized. Then, at the moment of arriving to the classroom they were trying to get the images they did not have or writing the notes from the previous session, disturbing the session atmosphere as it is shown on J.E.27.

(J.E.27.) “The agendas are kind of distracting and time consuming for students since it does not have lines so they are doing them in order to write in an organized way”

Tatiana Caicedo, March 28th

Students seemed to be worried about decorating the agendas more than writing in English. The control of this resource could be improved as well as the management of them; for instance practitioners could keep agendas instead of letting students take them home.

## **6.2. Linguistic Outcomes**

Considering the results for this classroom project, there is a section for linguistic outcomes in which communicative achievements of students in a second language are

enumerated and described as well as their obstacles and difficulties in the process. Linguistic outcomes section consists of categories like students' reflections, students' awareness and students' communication and each category embodies strengths and challenges.

### **6.2.1. Students' Reflections**

Linguistic outcomes of learners were found in the reflections written and explained by them about the development of the session since those observations contributed to their ability to articulate ideas in a second language to criticize and comment a phenomena in which they are directly involved: The English session. This section embodies strengths as the use of questions and the use of structures from the book and challenges as the lack of vocabulary.

The first strength of students' reflections was the sharing of their opinions, interests and dislikes toward English sessions through the use of direct questions by the teacher as "what did you learn today?" and "What did you like of the session?" It was found that students looked for strategies like using dictionaries, guessing translations and asking the teachers to express what they thought in a second language. It was evidenced on S.A.1 (Students' Agendas) that they wrote their comments about the session with teachers and dictionaries support and with the expectation of a feedback, revealing an interest in an accurate communication in English.

(S.A.1.) "I like the pronunciation of the teachers" "I learnt to pronounce animals"

The use of questions like "What did you like about the class?" or "What did you learn in the class?" Encouraged students to expand their repertoire to express their feelings and thoughts

regarding the class and motivated them to look for strategies that helped their communicative intentions when asking the practitioner “Teacher, how do you say xxx in English?” and using resources as the dictionary or even the posters in the classroom.

The second strength in students’ reflections was the reception of learners’ opinions and comments about the sessions through the use of structures from Green eggs and ham book as “I like” and “I do not like”. The practice in context -with familiar information about students as their preferences- of the studied structures clarified its use to learners at the same time that served to them to manifest their expectations and beliefs of the English sessions. For instance, it was found on S.A.2 expressions as “I liked the images of Sam/ I do not like the noise” which evidenced that students appropriated structures from the book to let the teacher know what was interesting or boring about the session

The use of structures direct from the book green eggs and ham to reflect about the sessions encouraged students to think and express their feelings about the development of the class or its resources, contributing in this way to the improvement of their abilities to communicate useful and real information that was considered by the teachers. For instance, in Mariana's’ case, she did not like the goats of the book and the animal goat was changed for a different one that could rhyme with the word “boat” that was the one in the text and the animal chosen was “duck”. This let students know that their opinions were considered by practitioners regarding the session that was for them, making explicit the benefits of a successful communication in a second language in which one expresses a suggestion or a desire and the other one reacts to it.

#### **6.2.1.2. Challenges**

Practitioners concluded that one aspect that inhibited the reflections made by students was the lack of vocabulary. The absence of a repertoire to express their feelings, opinions, expectations and ideas made students create words or deduce that the phonetic similarity in Spanish make the words available in English. This was evidenced on S.A.3 which stated “I liked the refrains of the book”, letting the teachers note that some reflections did not make sense because many words were invented. For instance in the quote above, students used “refrain” referring to the Spanish word “saying” to talk about their likes in the class.

The lack of vocabulary impeded the successful observation and comment about the session by many students since they felt frustrated toward the expression of their ideas in English. Their intention to write or talk about their experience in English was blocked by the absence of words that could fulfill the meaning of their Spanish thoughts letting them see English as something obscure and unattainable. Although there were many moments in which the English words did not come to their heads, the support of the practitioners and the use of resources as the dictionaries, the notes on the agendas and the posters in the classroom helped the finding of an appropriate expression to the situation.

#### **6.2.2. Students’ Awareness**

Linguistic outcomes of learners were also found in students’ awareness about semantic differences and phonetic similarities of the chunks of language from the book *Green eggs and ham* by Dr. Seuss that made them differentiate between some words that, although very similar in the pronunciation, they are very different in their meanings. This section of student’s

awareness includes strengths as expansion of vocabulary and practice of pronunciation and challenges as discipline.

The first strength in students' awareness was the expansion of vocabulary through images pasted on their agendas. It was evidenced that students memorized the meaning of keywords from the book because they were pasting the images of the story in chronological order in such a way that they caught their meanings in context and used them in the activities proposed by the practitioners; for instance when the teacher said "goat" in a fragment of the story, they recognized in which image was the animal and then they pasted the image in their agendas. It was found on J.E.31. (see image 1 in the annex) that learners understood the meaning of expressions as "I am" and the meaning of specific words as "goat" by having the task to organize the story through images.

Regarding students' linguistic achievements, the use of visual aids positively impacted the memorization of the meaning of some words. Furthermore, the reconstruction of the story of green eggs and ham in a chronological order in the agendas made students understand the use of those words in context. This activity expanded the English vocabulary of the participants and let them perceive the necessity of having those new words contextualized to understand what they pretend to communicate.

The second strength in student's awareness was the improvement of their oral skills by repeating the rhymed chunks of language of the book mixed with their preferences in terms of like and dislikes. The rhymes in the book motivated students to actively repeat and to differentiate the meaning of the words that were very similar in their pronunciation. For instance, as it was evidenced in S.A.4 , students orally practiced the use of modals with words that look alike in the pronunciation but which were very different in their meaning.

(S.A.4.) | 'aɪ 'laɪk grɪ:n egz ənd hæm |  
'aɪ du: | 'aɪ 'laɪk ðəm | səm 'aɪ æm |  
ənd 'aɪ wʊd i:t ðəm ɪn ə bəʊt |  
ənd 'aɪ wʊd i:t ðəm wɪð ə ɡəʊt |

The sentences created by them after repeating the chunks of language were:

(S.A.4.) | 'aɪ də nɒt 'laɪk ɡəʊts |  
'aɪ 'laɪk bəʊts |

It was found that the use of rhymes encouraged students to repeat the chunks of language and to differentiate their meanings. It was also observed that the reading aloud of the new sentences created by them improved their initial pronunciation and encouraged other students to participate and correct the oral mistakes. The practice of pronunciation by rhymes was a successful strategy to inspire students' participation and risk taking, discovering that this was a process of learning in which everybody had the right to fail and be corrected.

#### **6.2.2.1 Challenges**

Teachers in development found that students' awareness was constrained by discipline issues since students took advantage of activities that required pronouncing aloud to scream others and disturb the session. It was observed that the repetition of chunks of language turned into a mess due to the excessive emotion of students to pronounce what was asked. It was evidenced on J.E.33. "I do not like the noise" that the student even made the observation on his agenda in response to the question "what did you like or dislike about the session?" Student's position showed a feeling of dissatisfaction about the atmosphere that impeded the successful development of the activities.

It was found that being aware of phonetic and semantic similarities or differences demands an atmosphere not of total silence but of concentration in which students can focus the goal of the resources that rhymed and the activities with them. It was also observed that practicing pronunciation requires a more effective classroom management that impedes the loss of the initial objective of the session.

### **6.2.3. Students' Communication**

Linguistic outcomes of learners were also found in students' communication since they were able to successfully express their own opinions, likes, dislikes, ideas and personal information with the teachers and classmates. This section includes strengths as exchange of familiar information and the use of determined structures from Green eggs and ham book as well as challenges like shyness because of the lack of vocabulary.

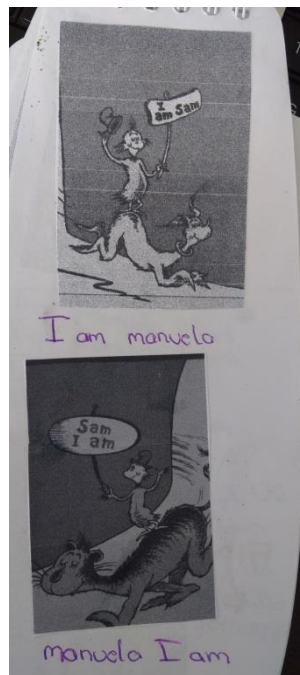
The first strength in student's communication was the exchange of familiar information through structures extracted from the book since learners could perceive the utility of English to communicate relevant information for them as their telephone number, address, likes, dislikes, desires, etc. It was evidenced on S.A.5. that personal questions asked to their partners as "Would you give me your telephone number?" or "May I know your address?" motivated students to participate in the session and to share with their partners their answers without fear to making mistakes because the main goal was to confidently talk and share what they already wrote.

With the use of familiar information for practicing the structures of the book, students took the risk and they were open to corrections since their intention was to successfully give the



information asked by others. In the same way, the use of this kind of information changed the attitude of students toward the English session since they perceived this second language as something useful in their contexts to communicate with others something they permanently used in Spanish as their addresses and telephone numbers.

The second strength in students' communication was the use of determined structures from the book of Green eggs and ham. The performance of students at the moment of sharing their personal information improved through the use of expressions taken from the book as "I would like", "I do not like" or "I like" which were already studied in previous sessions with the experiences of Sam. It was observed on S.A.6 that learners practiced at first the use of the structure from the book with content given by the teacher and after it, they added their own information.



(S.A.6.)

The understanding of the structures used for communicating inside the classroom is the first step to then mix them with familiar information of students. It was found that the sharing of this kind of exercises with their partners and in front of the classroom clarified the nature of the

structures and the uses they could have in a story like the one of Sam I am or in the real life with the information they decide to add. It was discovered that students needed to be sure about what they were saying and writing in their agendas and the use of those structures in the story to then use those chunks of language to communicate real and important information for them.

#### **6.2.3.1. Challenges**

Practitioners concluded that the main challenge at the moment of communicating real and familiar information inside the classroom was the shyness product of the lack of vocabulary to do it. It was evidenced on J.E.28 that some learners were willing to participate but they did not find the linguistic resources to do it, remaining silent during the session.

(J.E.28) “Some students were reluctant to participate because they did not know in English everything they want to say and although they wanted to communicate in a second language they did not found the linguistic resources to do it.”

Tatiana Caicedo, May 2<sup>nd</sup>

It was found that they were very shy and silent because they did not know how to pronounce in English or they did not know the words they must use; however, the support of the practitioners and the encouragement to use the available resources let students perceive the possibility of improving their current skills and to start saying more things in a second language. It was detected that the role of the teacher in the classroom to promote students’ participation and search of strategies to improve their oral abilities was fundamental for many students to start perceiving English as something familiar, easy and reachable.

### **6.3. Students' Responses**

Analyzing students' responses among the project can provide practitioners with a better understanding of the role of the learners. Thus, this analysis demonstrated the reaction perceived from learners towards the implementation. This section includes the strengths and challenges for learners' reaction to material and their emotional states.

#### **6.3.1. Reaction to Materials**

One of the key points for this project was the use of children literature. Hence, the first strength was the reaction to the materials brought to the lessons as this impacted positively learners' performance and their motivation for the classes. They felt interested in the visual aids as well as the agendas and book. This can be evidenced on the J.E.28 , and J.E.29. in which the observer described the attitude students had towards the material in different scenarios.

(J.E.28) "The selected book resulted attractive for learners because it was helped by many colorful images. Learners showed sympathy when receiving the pages from the book, some of them expressed: mira esas imagenes tan bonitas con la historia es como un mini libro."

Katherine Cano, April 4<sup>th</sup>

(J.E. 29) "When the teacher presented the images for Sam I am, students stopped doing other activities and they prepared themselves for the class. Alexandro, asked other partners to be quiet. He screamed: Oigan que silencio que va a empezar la teacher. This confirmed us the effectiveness of attractive materials"

Katherine Cano, April 25<sup>th</sup>

As the main material to conduct the implementation was the Green Eggs and Ham book, practitioners also considered other resources as many colorful images to complement the

development of the lessons and the learning process itself. It was found that the appropriate use of children's literature is a good strategy for communicative purposes due to the fact that it was easier for learners to be focused on the topic, structures and explanations owing to the help from visual aids to improve comprehension.

### **6.3.2. Emotional States**

The second strength in the students' responses was their emotional states. Practitioners found out that it was necessary to challenge learners with different activities as circle talks that could reflect how they felt toward the classes and also to create a good atmosphere among the participants. Emotions such as shyness and laziness shown among the lessons, provided the practitioners the occasion to change those kind of states to improve the development of the classes. It was found that through this kind of activities, students' emotional states were transformed from shyness to motivation to enhance participation. Learners felt comfortable to participate and to take the risk. This was evidenced on J.E.30. in which the students' responses toward the activity owing to their emotional states contributed to the flow of the tasks:

(J.E.30.) "There were written on the board the main chunks of language and once again we worked on its pronunciation by listening to the voice of all of them, so through raffles and throwing a ball they were asked to read aloud and answer them if it was necessary. It was very challenging to them because they were very shy to pronounce English words but many classmates were very supportive and asked the others to at least give it a try by saying: eso es muy fácil, hágale que si es capaz, deje la bobada "

Katherine Cano, May 9<sup>th</sup> 2017

Implementing activities as circle talk to challenge learners to improve their participation demonstrated it was an efficient strategy since learners were challenged to talk in front of their classmates through the repetition of the chunks of language such as “I would not like them here or there, I would not like them anywhere” and answering the questions like “Do you like Green Eggs and Ham?” including the correct pronunciation. This mutual presentation contributed increasing their confidence using the language and the development of the activities planned by the practitioners. Moreover, this enhanced students’ willing to participate, help and learn with a better attitude as they backed up their partners to accomplish the tasks asked by the teacher.

### **6.3.3. Challenges**

The main challenge for the students’ responses was the fact that some of them were reluctant to participate. Learners that were not interested distracted other students and disrupted the flow of the lessons. This was found on the J.E.31. and J.E.32. in which few students were not focused on the class so the teacher needed to stop and change the disposed time for the lesson.

(J.E.31.) “Some of the learners in the back did not pay attention to the teacher, distracting other students and generating discipline problems. This made the teacher to stop to call their attention, affecting the arranged timeline.”

Katherine Cano, March 21<sup>st</sup> 2017

(J.E.32.) “Some ss were talking a lot and other classmates asked them constantly to keep silent. They said: Por favor no dejan escuchar. Que algarabia. The teacher decided to call their attention and involved the in service teacher to take them with the coordinator. ”

Katherine Cano, May 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017

Having some students distracted or doing other things hindered their responses on the tasks as well as the learning process itself since they were not focused given the atmosphere

disrupted by discipline issues such as people screaming and throwing objects to the ceiling. For this reason, the practitioners reflected upon the ways to motivate those particular learners to avoid the disruption of the majority of participants.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The inclusion of literature in an EFL classroom proved to be a powerful teaching tool to promote the use of English with communicative purposes in a fifth grade at *Instituto Tecnico Marillac*, located in *Santa Rosa de Cabal*. It was confirmed how chunks of language from children's literature can support the communication in a second language by including learner's familiar information. This classroom project evidenced that the answers exchanged through the structures given by the book let students perceive English as something that served them to say important things about them and not only to relate to academic matters. Additionally, this idea is supported by Hişmanoğlu (2005) who portrays literature as a potent resource in terms of universality, non-triviality, personal relevance, variety, interest, economy, suggestive power, and ambiguity. Consequently, teachers utilized "Green Eggs and Ham" book to encourage participation and appropriation of the chunks of language through the exchange of personal data as students' preferences, dislikes, opinions, telephone numbers, addresses or favorite food.

With this implementation, practitioners evidenced that one of the main challenges to use literature with communicative purposes was students' reluctance to participate, which affected the timeline as well as the expected development of the activities. It was realized that student's attitudes highly impacted the learning atmosphere since their lack of interest and participation impeded the assessment of their learning process.

In the light of the advantages of including literature with communicative purposes, teachers in development perceived the effectiveness of the benefits of literature as a resource in the classroom due to its authenticity. In agreement with Hişmanoğlu's (2005) point of view, literature stimulated the acquisition of language through the use of authentic material and real

situations, which are inexhaustible resources that promote language awareness in learners. Accordingly, visual aids and rhymes from the book were adapted to learners' familiar information and this strategy proved to increase their level of participation and facilitated the understanding of the chunks of language.

Students were more aware about the activities that included images, pictures or exercises that make them sing or repeat rhymes. Practitioners noticed that learners memorized the meaning of keywords from the book because they were pasting on their agendas the images of the story in chronological order. This strategy made learners catch the meanings of some words in their context and encouraged them to use that new vocabulary in other activities. On the other hand, it was observed that with the rhymes from the book learners felt motivated to actively repeat and to differentiate the meaning of the words that were very similar in their pronunciation.

Moreover, it was concluded that the creation of new sentences by students using the book as authentic material (Ghosn, 2002), and the reading aloud of their own sentences improved learners' initial pronunciation and encouraged other students to participate and correct the oral mistakes. The main issues of the activities proposed during the implementations regarded on the lack of vocabulary and discipline problems. Teachers in development evidenced that student's absence of a repertoire to express their feelings, opinions, expectations and ideas made them create words that did not make sense in English, impeding the successful communication in a second language. In addition, practitioners realized that learners stopped the sharing of their new sentences with their personal information because of the noisy atmosphere product of disruptive behavior patterns.



Teachers concluded that by connecting their body movements, mimics and modulation of their voices, they not only clarified the topics for learners but also engaged them in the session. Kinesthetic abilities of practitioners were developed as they made explicit some vocabulary and structures from the book in front of the classroom increasing students' understanding and participation. Practitioners perceived that an identity as professionals was created by exploring abilities in modeling a topic, explaining a thematic or conducting an activity. Furthermore, practitioners understood the necessity of specific reactions or approaches to accomplish the demands of each learning process and to monitor the performance of each student.

Equally important, it was concluded that practitioners' arrangement of schedules as well as the motivation of students were essential challenges to face. Teachers in development noticed that the time allowed for the different stages that this implementation involved as planning, observing, reflecting and implementing was a difficult aspect to control. Moreover, they proved that the strategies for encouraging students to actively participate and to change their perspectives not only about English but also about communication depended on their creativity and teachers' skills, which made it a big risk to take.

Introducing literature in a second language classroom is definitely a challenge and even more if it includes a communicative purpose. Thus, for expanding the results of this project in benefit of students and teachers, it should have more time to be developed. In this way, if time is extended, the project would have more resources to extract useful and varied chunks of language that allow students to be more creative with the information they add to those structures. It would be necessary to dedicate more than 10 sessions to explore the advantages of literature stated by Sell (2000), Ghosn (2002) or Hişmanoğlu (2005), and to encourage communication in English through its contents. This implicates a previous knowledge of English grammar and

pronunciation as well as strong reading skills. The project can be taken as an open door to explore students' abilities and the most appropriate resources in terms of English, literature, reading and communication.

In addition, considering the implications, the implementation of this classroom project contemplated many factors to guarantee its successful development as the selection of material, permissions, students' and practitioners' commitment, and schedule arrangement. Firstly, the project involved the selection of a specific book as well as a permission sent to the directives of the institution in order to acquire the approval to execute the lessons. Furthermore, it included student's commitment to allow a couple of teachers in development to teach them English with communicative purposes through the use of books. It also implied practitioners' commitment to give the best of their teaching skills and to reflect after each session about the strengths and things to improve, being open to changes based on those observations. This project also involved a schedule arrangement for the planning, designing, reflection and implementing stages.

Furthermore, regarding the limitations, there were some factors that inhibited the natural and successful flow of the lessons as institutional issues, students' attitude and number of implementations. To begin with, administrative issues affected the arranged time. Secondly, disruptive behavior patterns disturbed the motivation and participation of other students. Finally, another element that limited the implementation and its possible impact was the number of sessions as well as its length. Conclusively, this classroom project is an invitation for future practitioners to explore further the field of literature connected with English teaching as it represents an enrichment and useful resource.

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